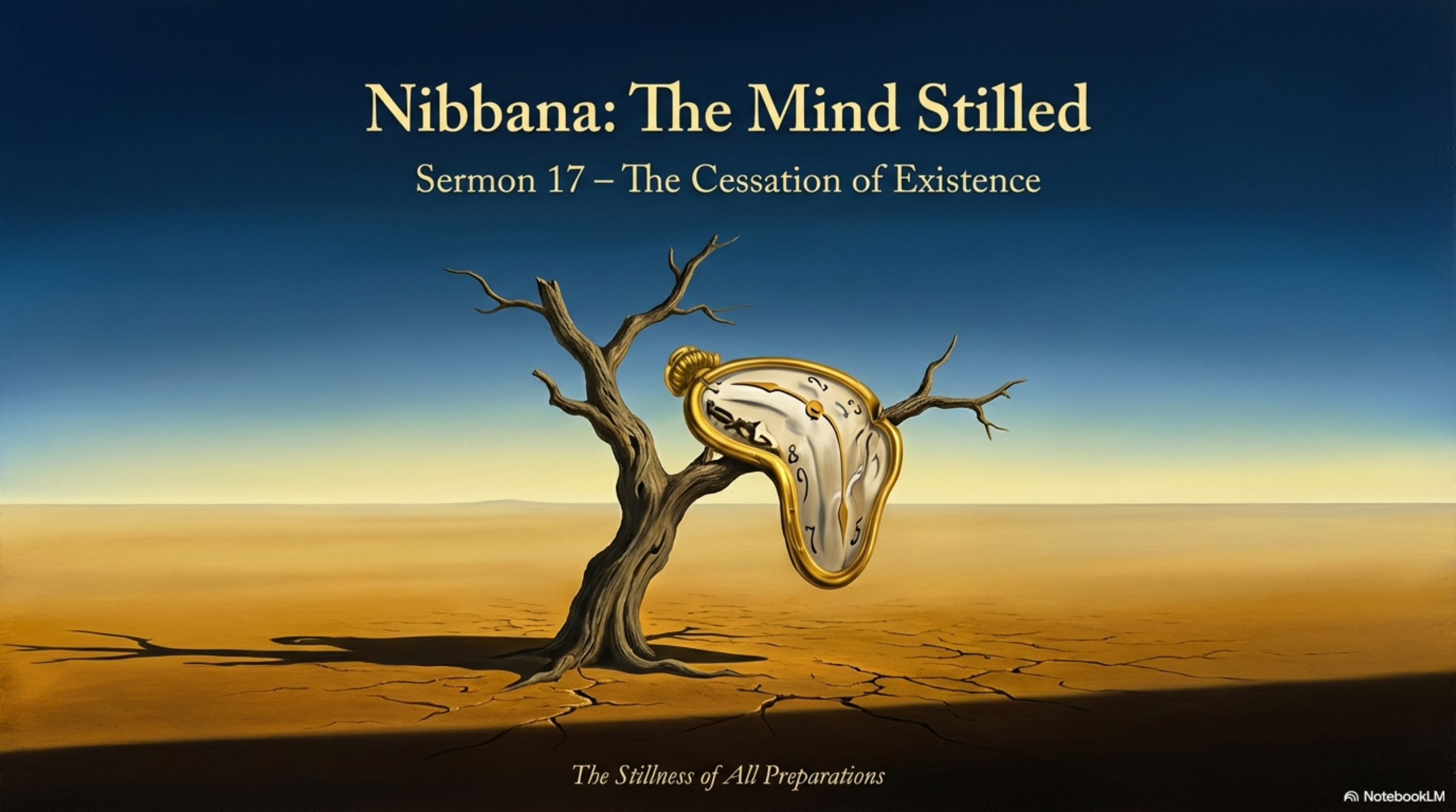
Nibbana: The Mind Stilled

Sermon 17 – The Cessation of Existence



The Stillness of All Preparations

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Stepping Back from the Waking Dream

The Practice
In daily life, the instruction is “in the seen, just the seen.” It is a shift from participating in the drama to witnessing the machinery.

The Wide-Angle Lens
This creates a panoramic, disengaged perspective. One steps back to watch the mind’s tendency toward *papañca* (proliferation)—the running after concepts like “tree,” “branch,” or “green.”

The Insight
By dropping the concepts, the “object” collapses, and consequently, the “subject” (the viewer) fades.

Headline: “The Stilling of the Machine” in Adobe Caslon Pro.

Body Text in Garamond Premier Pro:

Sabba-sankhara-samatho

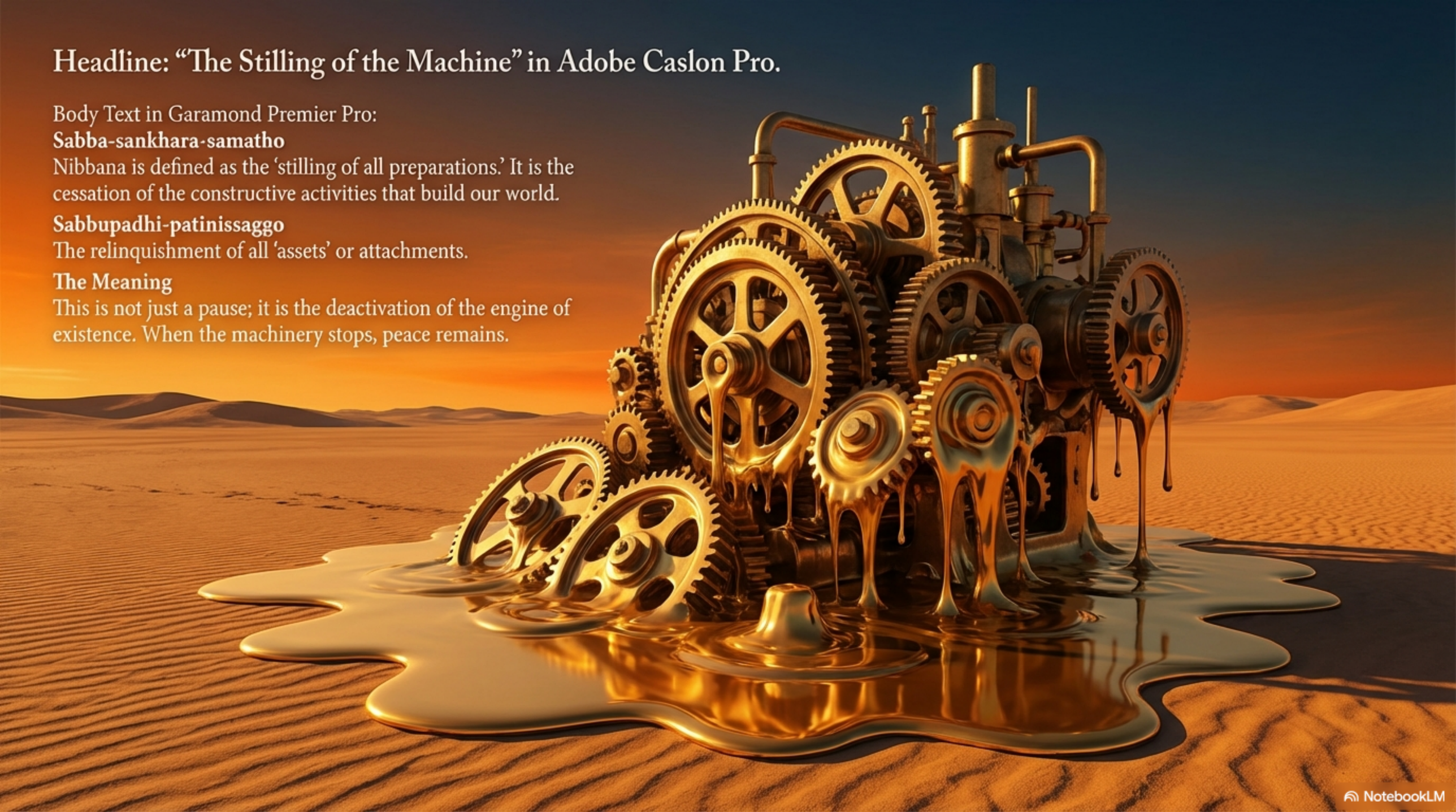
Nibbana is defined as the ‘stilling of all preparations.’ It is the cessation of the constructive activities that build our world.

Sabbupadhi-patinissaggo

The relinquishment of all ‘assets’ or attachments.

The Meaning

This is not just a pause; it is the deactivation of the engine of existence. When the machinery stops, peace remains.



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Headline: “Touching the Deathless with the Body”
The Paradox
The texts say the Arahant has ‘touched the deathless element with the body’ (*kayena amatam dhatum phusayitva*).
Yet, the deathless is ‘asset-less’ and free from contact.
The Resolution
How does one touch that which cannot be touched? To be free from the ‘touch’ of craving, clinging, and sensory impact *is* the touching of the Deathless.
Whole-Being Realization
It is an experiential realization with one’s entire being, not merely an intellectual theory.
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Headline: “Existence is a Trick Fire”

Body Text in Garamond Premier Pro:

The Illusion

Just as a spinning firebrand creates the optical illusion of a continuous circle of fire, our rapid succession of perceptions creates the illusion of a solid, continuous 'self' and ‘world.’

The Reality

Existence is a rapid series of risings and fallings.

The Gaps

The meditator attends to the *cessation* aspect.
By seeing the gaps between the moments, the illusion of compactness shatters. The circle vanishes;
only the cessation remains.

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Bhava-Nirodha (Cessation of Existence)

The Definition

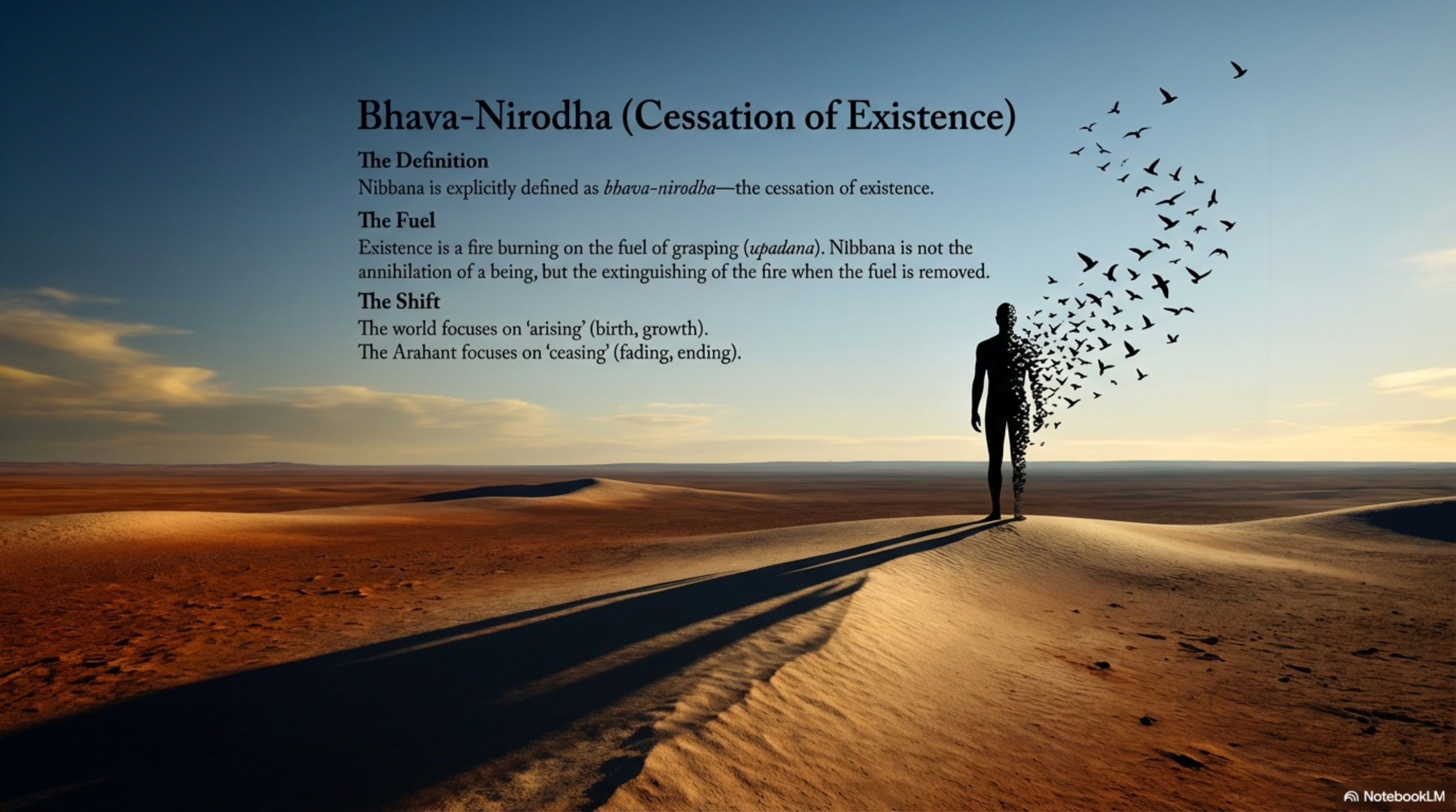
Nibbana is explicitly defined as *bhava-nirodha*—the cessation of existence.

The Fuel

Existence is a fire burning on the fuel of grasping (*upadana*). Nibbana is not the annihilation of a being, but the extinguishing of the fire when the fuel is removed.

The Shift

The world focuses on 'arising' (birth, growth).
The Arahant focuses on 'ceasing' (fading, ending).



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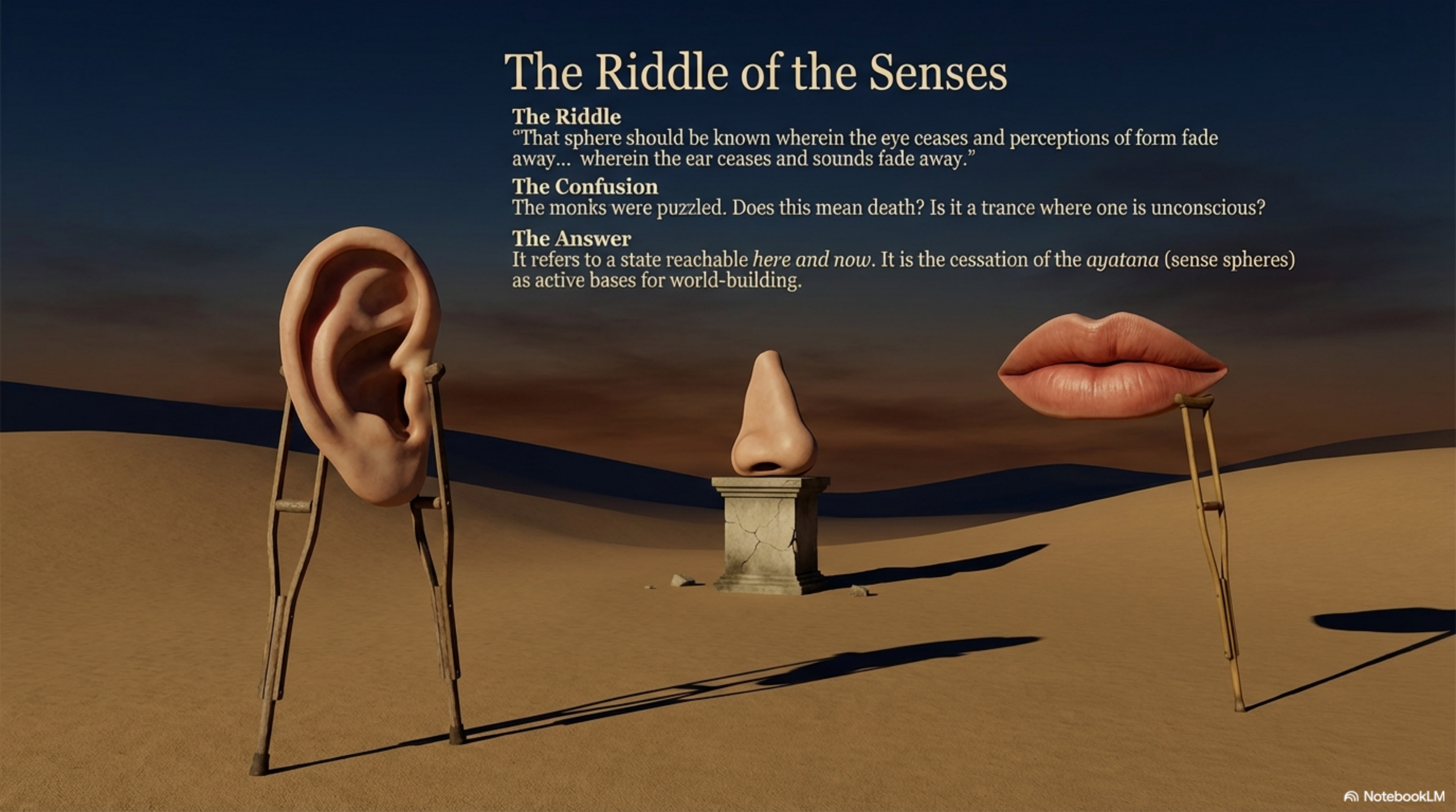
The Riddle of the Senses

The Riddle
"That sphere should be known wherein the eye ceases and perceptions of form fade away... wherein the ear ceases and sounds fade away."

The Confusion
The monks were puzzled. Does this mean death? Is it a trance where one is unconscious?

The Answer
It refers to a state reachable *here and now*. It is the cessation of the *ayatana* (sense spheres) as active bases for world-building.



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Headline (Adobe Caslon Pro):

“Conscious, Yet Not Experiencing”

Body Text (Garamond Premier Pro):

The Question

Can one be conscious (*ɔæñm̄*) and yet not esperience earth, water, fire, or air?

The State

Yes. In the ‘Signless Concentration,’ the senses are physically intact, but their ‘lustre’ is gone.

De-lustering

The senses no longer trigger the bifurcation of subject and object. Forms are there, but they don’t ‘land’ as esperience. The mind does not ‘mind’ them.

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The Sphere Without Sun or Moon

The Text
“There is no sun or moon, no coming or going, no standing or sitting.”

The Meaning
This is not a physical location or an afterlife realm.

No Sun/Moon
The ‘light’ of sense-objects and the ‘light’ of the mind have faded.
The dominance of day (active perception) and night (unconsciousness) is transcended.

No Movement
Without the reference points of ‘here’ and ‘there,’ the concepts of coming and going lose all meaning.

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Steady Because of Freedom

Not Propped Up
This concentration is “not leaning forward, not bending back.” It is not maintained by the force of suppression or willpower.

The Spinning Top
Just as a top stands perfectly still *because* of its speed and freedom, the Arahant’s mind is steady because of its liberation from grasping.

Contentment
It is a ‘steadiness born of non-doing."

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Crossing the Stream
Downstream
Ordinary beings swept away by desires.
Upstream
The practitioner fighting the current of habit.
Stationary
The Non-returner, stuck in high heavens.
Paragata
The Arahant has ‘Crossed Over’ to the Farther Shore. They stand on firm ground, beyond the flood.
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Standing on Ground, Crossed Over

No Return

The Arahant stands on the ‘Farther Shore’ (Paragata).

Daily Life

Even when eating, walking, or speaking, the Arahant does not ‘come back’ to the illusion of the near shore (Samsara).

The Shift

They engage with the world, but they are no longer of the world. The view is permanently shifted; the ‘self’ illusion does not rebuild itself.

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The Triple Gateway to Deliverance

Signless (Animitta) Transcending the signs and marks of perception.
Desireless (Appanihita) Letting go of the thirst for becoming or future states.
Void (Sunnata) Seeing the emptiness of self and world.
Convergence These are the three aspects of the same realization—the entry points to the Uncreated.

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The End of Suffering

‘Just this is the end of suffering.’
Nibbana is not a place you go to;
it is the cessation of the illusion that ‘you’ are here.
The Fire is Out.
The fuel of grasping is exhausted.
The coolness (*Nibbuta*) remains.

Final Insight.
Peace is not the presence of happiness,
but the absence of the burning.

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Headline: “Reflection” in Adobe Caslon Pro
Body Text:
The Inquiry How does the ‘trick fire’ of your own life create the illusion of continuity?
The Practice Can you find moments to ‘step back’ and witness the machinery of perception, rather than being lost in the movie?
Based on Sermon 17, Nibbana Sermons by Katukurunde Nanananda. in Garamond Premier Pro
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